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SUBJECT: ROMANIA: 2008 COUNTRY REPORTS ON TERRORISM

REF: (A) STATE 124915; (B) STATE 124033; (C) STATE 120019

¶1. This message contains Post's submission for the 2008 Country Reports on Terrorism.

¶2. Begin text. Romania provided throughout 2008 a full range of public and diplomatic support to counterterrorism efforts. Approximately 500 Romanian troops were serving in Iraq and 820 in Afghanistan as part of coalition and NATO Alliance efforts to combat terrorism and promote peace and stability. The Romanian troops in Afghanistan, representing a 300-plus increase over 2007, demonstrated a significant and growing contribution to the efforts against international terrorism and in promotion of regional peace and security. In June, the Supreme Council for National Defense (CSAT) confirmed Romania's commitment of troops deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan through 2009. Romania makes its airspace, ground infrastructure, and naval facilities available to U.S. and NATO forces. Romania is an active participant in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

¶3. Romania implements the 13 International Conventions and Protocols on preventing and countering terrorism. Romanian also ratified the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, the Protocol amending the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism, and the Council of Europe Convention on laundering, search, seizure and confiscation of the proceeds from crime and on the financing of terrorism.

¶4. The Romanian Government has comprehensive and robust internal mechanisms to combat terrorism, including the development of a "National Anti-Terrorism Strategy" and guidelines to prevent the use of Romanian financial institutions, including its banking system, for the purpose of financing terrorist-related activities. The CSAT in 2008 updated the General Protocol for the National System for Preventing and Countering Terrorism (NSPCT) that was adapted in ¶2002. The Protocol empowered the Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI) as the national authority in the counter-terrorist field and the technical coordinator of the NSPCT.

¶5. The SRI operates as the technical coordinator for 11 Ministries of the Romanian Government; three other special Services (the Foreign Intelligence Service, the Protection and Guard Service, and Special Telecommunications Service); three other governmental agencies (the National Agency for Export Controls, the National Committee for Control of Nuclear Activities, and the National Office for Prevention and Control of Money Laundering); the National Bank of Romania; and the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice. There are 54 prosecutors assigned to the Directorate to Investigate International Criminal Organizations and Terrorism.

¶6. Bucharest is also the headquarters for the Southeast European Cooperation Initiative (SECI) Regional Center for Combating Transborder Crime (SECI Center), a regional center that provided law enforcement training and intelligence sharing on transborder criminal activities, including terrorist-related activities, for the 12 member countries in South Eastern and Central Europe, including Romania. The SECI Center's Anti-Terrorism task force, in which Romania participates, is chaired by Turkey.

¶7. The High Court of Cassation of Justice reconfirmed in February 2008 the 20-year prison sentence for Omar Hayssam who was convicted

for terrorism in the 2004 kidnapping case of four Romanian journalists in Iraq (the Syrian-born, Romanian citizen Hayssam fled Romania following his conviction and remains at large).

¶8. On April 21, 2008, the government adopted Emergency Ordinance (EO) number 53 per 2008 to amend the law 656 per 2002 to prevent and sanction money laundering and to introduce measures to prevent and combat terrorism financing. The EO was adopted to incorporate into Romanian legislation the Directive 2005/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the European Council of October 26, 2005, on the prevention of using the financial system for the purpose of money laundering or terrorism financing, and two other related EC Directives (2006/70/EC of August 1, 2006, and 2005/60/EC). These Directives required action on the part of Romania following its January 2007 induction into the European Union. EO 53 per 2008 took effect upon publication in the Official Gazette.

¶9. Romania passed Law no. 112 on May 15, ratifying the September 2007 Bucharest Protocol to the May 1999 Treaty between the United States of America and Romania on Mutual Legal Assistance on Criminal Matters. The Protocol enhances mutual assistance, including mutual assistance on money laundering and terrorism matters. The Protocol will enhance the already robust U.S. and Romania cooperation on counterterrorism law enforcement issues. Notable cases of U.S.-Romania law enforcement cooperation in this area include the extradition of Tareq Al Ghazi and Luis Moreno to the United States to stand trial on terrorism and money laundering charges related to their efforts to sell weapons to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC); significant assistance related to Viktor Bout - the renowned international arms trafficker known as the "Merchant of Death" who also agreed to sell weapons to the FARC; and in the case of Yeyha Ali Zeiter who was arrested on drug-related terrorism charges.

¶10. On June 4, 2008, the government issued Executive Order 594/2008 which approves the rules to enforce the provisions of the law 656/2002 in conformity with EU regulations on preventing and sanctioning money laundering, as well as on establishing some measures to prevent and counter the financing of terrorist activities.

¶11. On June 25, 2008, the National Securities Commission issued Order 83/2008 to institute measures to prevent and fight money laundering and terrorism financing via the capital market. The order was published in the Official Gazette 525 of July 11, 2008.

¶12. The National Bank of Romania issued its own internal regulations regarding customer due diligence procedures in order to prevent money laundering and terrorism financing. The regulations were published in the Official Gazette on July 14, 2008.

¶13. The Romanian Government's Emergency Decision no. 202/2008, which was published in the Official Gazette on December 8, 2008, provides a mechanism for the implementation of international sanctions to prevent and counter terrorism, including empowering the National Office for Prevention and Control of Money Laundering, reporting on suspicious transactions, blocking funds, and obliging institutions to conduct due diligence in establishing the bona fides of clients.

¶14. On December 16, 2008, the U.S. Embassy in Bucharest received through the local mail an envelope with a Texas postmark containing an unknown, suspicious white powder. The event was similar to others that occurred at several other U.S. Embassies within the same day. The SRI assisted the Embassy in sampling and analyzing the substance, which was determined to be non-lethal. End text.

¶15. POC for the terrorism report for Bucharest is Christopher Ellis. Tel. number is (40) (21) 200-3425 ext. 3425 and e-mail EllisCA2@state.gov.

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